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Allegiances

Pineclan
Leader -
-Brightstar: Orange tom with tan stripes, yellow eyes

Deputy -
-Orangefang: Black tom with orange and brown spots, amber eyes

Medicine Cat -
-Ravenfeather: Black she-cat with grey designs, green eyes

Warriors -
-Redpelt: Black tom with red and brown spots
-Talonstripe: Brown tom with tan stripes
-Ivystorm: Grey she-cat with black markings and green eyes
-Stonefang: Greyish- blackish tom with light grey stripes
-Tigerheart: Orange tom with grey stripes (Leapordpaw, Tawnypaw)

Apprentices -
-Leapordpaw: Tan tom with black swirls and markings; Stays with Tawnypaw to help him
-Tawnypaw: Brown tom with tan stripes; mute

Queens -
-Jaysong (Owlkit): Blueish greyish she-cat, green eyes
-Windstripe (Frostkit, Greenkit): White she-cat with grey designs, blue eyes

Kits -
-Owlkit: White tom with brown spots -Frostkit: White she-cat with dark grey stripes
-Greenkit: Grey she-cat with burning green eyes

Elders -
-Missingfang: Pure grey she-cat with brown eyes.

Gorgeclan

Leader-
-Lichenstar: Pure grey tom with dark green eyes

Warriors-
-Blackclaw: Pure black tom with black claws and one grey paw

Leafclan
Leader-
-Fallenstar: Black she-cat with white stripes and blue eyes

Apprentices-
-Honeypaw: Tan tom with black stripes, blue eyes

If I'm forgetting any warriors for any reason, please let me know! Thanks, and enjoy the book!

Prologue

The moon was high in the sky, illuminating the silent clan resting below it. Any noise there was had been drained out by the quiet sound of chirping crickets.

Leaves rustled as a grey cat with long hair rushed through them, followed by a group of other cats that had similar body features; they were all sleak and muscular.

The grey cat stopped at an area by a creek full of rocks, a large pine tree towering over the area on the other side. The cats behind him stopped as well.

Another group of cats emerged from the other side of the rocky area, fur bristling defensively.

The grey cat's deep, sea-green eyes met theirs. "So," he started, "you have come to an agreement, yes?"

A pure white tom stepped up. "We will never surrender the Great Rocks to you," he started, "they have been and will continue to be ours for moons."

"Very well then, Whitestar. There is only one option," the grey cat said, claws bearing. "We will take it by force. I will say it once again: you will give us this section of territory, or face death!"

"Never!"

The group of muscular cats lunged at the other group, following closely behind their leader. A blueish-greyish tom pinned one of the cats down and began to claw at their back, hoping they would retreat.

War broke out through the forest. The cats on the defense side were full of agility, while the other group of cats were full of strength. Only the limits of their willpower would decide what the outcome

would be.

Finally, the grey cat pinned Whitestar down onto a sharp rock, causing him to yowl in pain. "Give it up!" The grey cat ordered.

Whitestar looked into the cat's eyes one last time and shook his head no. The grey cat scowled and raised his claws to Whitestar's throat as quick as lightning, instantly tearing through it.

The forest became quiet as his cry of agony rang through it. Blood began pouring out of the wound. Whitestar looked at his attacker one last time before the life drained from his eyes.

"Y-you killed him!" One of the cats cried out. "He was on his last life, you mouse-brain!"

The grey cat smirked, and, with a flick of his tail, he and his other cats ran from the scene.

The forest was quiet in disbelief as the remaining, wounded cats gathered around their leader's lifeless body and dragged it back to camp.

Author's Note:
Hey guys! Thank you for beginning to read my story! I was bored and decided to write this, although I hadn't been successful with Warrior Cats fanfictions in the past...

Anyway, I'm sorry this prologue was extremely short! It was late at night, and I had school the next morning, so I wanted to finish it tonight. Another thing to add is that I will be updating this quickly.

But anyway, sorry for the short length of this prologue. I hope you continue reading this book, though, so you'll be able to read any updates on it when it comes out. Thanks!

Chapter 1

"Frostkit. Frostkit! Wake up!"

Frostkit opened her eyes to find her sister, Greenkit, staring at her. She scrambled to her paws in alarm.

"Come on, Frostkit, let's go play! It's the first day of leafbare!" Greenkit urged, attempting to bat Frostkit's tail.

Frostkit shook her fur and plumped back onto the ground. "It's too cold to go outside. I want to stay here with mommy!" She whined.

Greenkit sighed. She stared out the opening to the den and looked at the slowly falling snow, yearning for a friend to play with. "Fine," she finally said, "I guess I'll have to listen to Missingfang's story by myself."

That brought Frostkit back to her feet. "I want to hear Missingfang's story! I love her stories!" She exclaimed. Greenkit smiled and motioned to the nursery exit. "Bye mom, we'll be back!" Frostkit called out.

The two kits happily stumbled out of the nursery. They were surrounded by a clearing of what seemed to be white powder. Snow.

"Yay! I want to play before we go!" Frostkit said, suddenly changing her mind. Greenkit smiled and bounded around happily with her.

They wrestled with each other in the snow. Greenkit's naturally grey fur was coated in a soft layer of snow, her bright, tealish-greenish eyes standing out.

As for Frostkit, her coat didn't change much. Her white coat stayed the same, but her heavy, grey stripes were blended with a mixture of white, appearing a light grey.

The two kits tumbled around for a while, occasionally jumping up

in a playful fighting stance.

"How about this," Frostkit started, "You can be an enemy clan, and I can be our clan. We can train to be warriors!"

"But we're not apprentices yet. And I want to be our clan!" Greenkit objected.

"You'll be apprentices soon."

Frostkit and Greenkit quickly looked over to see Stonefang.

"Daddy!" They both cried.

They ran up to him and playfully jumped at his legs.

"Hey, guys. You do know that you'll be apprentices in a moon from now."

The kits' eyes lit up with excitement. "I want to be a warrior now!" Frostkit exclaimed. Greenkit slightly nodded, mimicking the same thing.

A settle laugh was heard from a short distance. The kits looked over to see Ivystorm, a she-cat warrior with a tawny colored pelt gently laughing with a sweet smile.

"You'll have to wait for that," she gently said. "When I was a kit, I wanted to become a warrior the first time I even knew what they were."

Frostkit's eyes lit up. "Really?!" She exclaimed, wanting to know more about the warriors.

"Yep. But you're a patient one, it seemd," Ivystorm said. Frostkit frowned. "Not anymore!" She exclaimed.

"I can't wait a whole moon," Greenkit complained. She whined and slumped down onto the soft snow, instantly rising back to her paws due to the cold.

"You know what will make it seem to go by quicker?" Stonefang

asked.

"What?"

"Missingfang has a good story to tell. It will make time seem to fly by," he answered.

Frostkit excitedly got up on her feet and dashed to the elder's den, Greenkit quick at her paws.

They ran up to Missingfang, an old she-cat who was laying in the sun where it was warm, eating a magpie.

"Missingfang! Missingfang!" The kits urged.

"What is it? You want to hear another story?" Missingfang suggested, seeming to read their minds. The kits nodded happily and settled into the soft bedding of the elder's den.

"Alright," Missingfang started.

"Once upon a time, there was a blond kit named Brightkit. He was very energetic, just like you guys. When he became an apprentice, he was mentored by the current clan leader of the time, Whitestar. Moons passed, and after a long time of training, he eventually claimed his warrior name: Brightfur."

The kits stared at the elder in bewilderment as she continued with the story.

"Sooner or later, he had proven himself worthy to become the clan's deputy. But then, tragedy struck. Gorgeclan demanded for us to give them a part of our territory. Whitestar refused, and him, Brightfur, and three other warriors went to fight them for territory that night."

Frostkit was staring at them with eyes as wide as the sun. Her heart was racing, every sinew, bone, and nerve in her body flooding with anticipation of what happened.

"That night," Missingfang started again, "Whitestar lost his last life and joined Starclan. Brightfur, as the deputy, soon became the new

clan leader and claimed his nine lives, becoming-"

"Brightstar."

Frostkit, Greenkit, and Missingfang looked over to see Brightstar standing by them. "I see you're telling my story again?" He asked.

"Woah!" Frostkit and Greenkit bounced up onto their feet and ran to their leader, excitement filling their nerves.

"Did you really fight Gorgeclan?" Frostkit asked.

"What was it like to be a warrior? Deputy? *Leader*?!" Greenkit added.

Brightstar smiled, but slightly frowned at Missingfang. "They shouldn't know about that at this age," he warned. Missingfang just shrugged it off and continued eating her magpie.

"Why don't you two go back to the nursery where it's warm?" Brightstar suggested. The two kits smiled and ran off, leaving Brightstar to watch them leave.

Chapter 2

"All cats old enough to catch their own prey gather here under the lichenrock for a clan meeting."

Brightstar's words rang throughout the camp, bringing many cats out of their dens. They grouped around the lichenrock and sat down, some of them flicking their tails with excitement.

Frostkit and Greenkit were already standing by Windstripe in the middle of the group as she gently groomed them. "You two are beautiful," she said. Frostkit smiled with nervousness and Greenkit accidentally slipped out an excited mew.

As Frostkit looked around, she noticed another kit standing with Jaysong.

"Pineclan," Brightstar started, "today we have three kits becoming apprentices today. Owlkit, please step up."

A white kit with brown markings on him steppes up nervously. Frostkit noticed that he was the othee kit they noticed in the clearing.

"Owlkit," Brightstar began, "you have reached the age of six moons. It is time you be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will now be known as Owlpaw. Your mentor will be Talonstripe. I hope he will pass down all that he knows to you."

Talonstripe walked up to Owlpaw, and they touched noses. The clan chanted Owlpaw's name. "Owlpaw! Owlpaw!"

Brightstar silenced the clan. "Greenkit, please step forward," he called out. Greenkit couldn't help but smile and hurried up to under the lichenrock.

Brightstar started, "Greenkit, you have reached the age of six moon,

and it is now time for you to be apprenticed. From this day on, until you receive your warrior name, you will be known as Greenpaw. Your mentor will be Redpelt. I hope he passes on all that he knows to you."

Frostkit couldn't help but smile as the clan cheered her sister's name. She began to think about who her mentor would be. The only warrior left that needed an apprentice would be Ivystorm. She suddenly became excited, for Ivystorm was one of her favorite warriors.

"Frostkit," Brightstar started, "please step forward. Excitement flooded Frostkit as she boldly stepped up to under the lichenrock. She puffed out her chest and waited.

Brightstar's words began boldly and seemed to stick to Frostkit's mind. "Frostkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is now time you become apprenticed. From this day forward, until you receive your warrior name, you will be addressed as Frostpaw."

Frostpaw smiled and waited for the anouncment of her mentor. She was now positive that it was Ivystorm.

Brightstar spoke loudly, "I will take on the role of mentoring you. I will pass down everything I know to you and make sure you become a great warrior."

Frostpaw's heart sank at the words, saddened that Ivystorm would not be her mentor, but then excitement filled her again as she realized that the clan leader himself was mentoring her.

She looked around as the clan cheered their names.

"Frostpaw! Greenpaw! Owlpaw!" They repeated.

Frostpaw smiled. She was now finally an apprentice, one step away from becoming a warrior.

Frostpaw and Greenpaw raced to the apprentices' den, excited to see their new den and meet their new denmates.

They skidded to a halt as they made it through the entrance, looking around. Two apprentices were laying down, one eating a vole and the other a mouse. One was a beautiful brownish-orangeish color, and the other was brown with black spots on it.

They looked up at Frostkit and Greenkit. "Hello," the brown and black speckled one said. "I assume your the new apprentices?"

"Yes, I'm Frostpaw. This is Greenpaw," Frostpaw said, motioning to her sister. The cat smiled. "Nice to meet you. I'm Leapordpaw, and this is Tawnypaw," the cat said, flicking his tail to the other apprentice. Tawnypaw smiled in greeting.

"Who's that?" Leapordpaw asked, looking behind them. Frostpaw turned around and saw Owlpaw walking to them. "I'm Owlpaw," he said, walking into the den.

"Nice to meet you," Leapordpaw said. Frostpaw looked at Tawnypaw. "Nice to meet you. I'm excited to be an apprentice with you!" She said.

Tawnypaw didn't respond.

"Oh..." Leapordpaw started, "I forgot to say it, but he's mute." Frostpaw looked back at Tawnypaw, and Tawnypaw gently nodded.

"Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't know," Frostpaw said. Tawnypaw shrugged, signaling that it was okay.

"Anyway, want to get some food?" Leapordpaw asked. "You must be hungry." He motioned to the fresh-kill pile.

Frostpaw shrugged. "Alright," she said.

She walked out of the den by herself, for Greenpaw and Owlpaw were deep in conversation.

When Frostpaw reached the fresh-kill pile, she picked up a plump mouse and began to walk back to the den, but something caught her eye. *Ivystorm!* She thought.

She quickly changed her direction and padded over to where

Ivystorm was laying.

"Hey, Ivystorm!" She greeted. Ivystorm smiled. "Frostpaw! Congratulations on becoming an apprentice! How are things going?" She asked.

Frostpaw shrugged. "It's great! Brightstar is mentoring me, and everycat in the apprentice den is nice! I was really hoping you would brcome my mentor though," she said.

Ivystorm gently smiled, waiting for Frostpaw to finish.

"But I'm still confused. You haven't had an apprentice yet, so I was sure you would become my mentor. Why not? Did Brightstar just really want to mentor me?"

Ivystorm's smile grew into a grin. "Frostpaw," she began, "I can't mentor you because I'm expecting kits."

Chapter 3

Frostpaw's heart seemed to leap out of her chest. "Oh my Starclan! Are you serious?!" She exclaimed. Ivystorm nodded.

"I can't believe it! Congratulations!" Frostpaw excitedly congratulated. Ivystorm laughed. "Thanks. Hey, I think your sister is calling you," she said, looking at Greenpaw, who was calling Frostpaw over with a vole under her paws.

Frostpaw nodded, said goodbye, and trotted over to where Greenpaw was standing. "Guess what?" Frostpaw quickly said before Greenpaw could even let out a syllable.

"What?"

"Ivystorm is expecting kits!" Frostpaw boldly and excitedly exclaimed the news. Greenpaw smiled. "Really? That's cool!" She said. "Anyway, you should come eat with us. We're talking about things to know as an apprentice."

Frostpaw nodded. "Finally! Something an apprentice would do!" She joked.

Frostpaw found herself digging into her mouse while sitting by Greenpaw and the others.

Leapordpaw was speaking. "The first thing you need to know is hunting patrols. Every once and a while, your mentor will take you on a hunting patrol with the warriors. But before you ever do that, you learn how to hunt," he said.

Frostpaw smiled. She wondered when her first lesson on hunting would be.

"Another very important thing to know is to never, and I mean *never,* do something wrong. Apprentices get pretty harsh punishments. If we get in trouble, we usually have to pick ticks off

of the elders, or change their bedding, or bring them extra food and stuff," Leapordpaw continued.

Frostpaw and the others spent the rest of the day talking about rules, the different prey around the area, and more.

"And this is the Great Rocks," Brightstar said, motioning to a rocky trench with a tap pine tree over it. Brightstar was showing Frostpaw the clan boundaries and the territory.

"Anything past the Great Pine belongs to Gorgeclan. During greenleaf, prey thrives in these rocks. But lately, the days have been becoming colder, and prey has been scarce. That's why tomorrow, I will show you how to catch prey and the basics of the hunting crouch," Brightstar added.

Frostpaw nodded as Brightstar continued to show her around Pineclan territory and the borders of it.

They made their way to a grey strip with yellow dotted on it. It carried a disgusting stench that sometimes stifled Frostpaw's breathing.

"This," Brightstar started, "is the Thunderpath. Monsters thrive on this, and it roars like thunder when one comes close."

The ground began to shake, startling Frostpaw. She stepped back from the Thunderpath and freaked out when a monster came roaring past. Brightstar smiled and laughed a small bit. "All apprentices are like that when they first see the Thunderpath," he said. "Even I was scared."

Frostpaw smiled and laughed with him. So far, having the clan leader as a mentor was great.

Frostpaw was close behind her leader as they walked through the camp entrance. The snow was glistening in the sun, tingling her paws until she couldn't feel them anymore.

"Frostpaw."

Frostpaw looked over to see Stonefang. "Dad? What is it?" She asked. Stonefang looked upset as he answered her. "It's your mother."

Frostpaw found herself racing to the medicine den. She made it to the entrance and was greeted by Ravenfeather, the medicine cat. "Come on in," she urged.

Frostpaw walked in and found three cats laying on bedding. She immediately noticed Tawnypaw. His nose was running and he was gently chewing on some catmint.

Frostpaw then looked over and noticed a warrior and another cat that made her stomach drop. Windstripe.

"Greencough," Ravenfeather said, walking up by Frostpaw. Frostpaw's heart sank. "Will they be okay?" She asked.

"Tawnypaw is showing signs of getting better, but the the others aren't," Ravenfeather replied. Frostpaw dipped her head. "Is there anything I can do?" She asked.

It took a moment for Ravenfeather to think. "Well... Could you go fetch me some catmint?" She asked. Frostpaw nodded. "Of course!"

She ran out of the den and made her way to the entrance, but she was stopped by Orangefang, the clan deputy.

"Where do you think you're going?" He asked. Frostpaw looked at him nervously, but calmed her nerves. "Ravenfeather asked me to go fetch some catmint for her," she answer strongly.

"Do you even know where to find catmint?" Orangefang asked. Frostpaw was silent in thought for a minute.

"Can't you find some by the Thunderpath?" She finally asked. Orangefang shook his head. "Nope. You can find some growing on the border between Leafclan and Pineclan, though," he said.

"Thanks!" Frostpaw said. She began to walk out of camp, but

Orangefang stopped her again. "You can't go alone. You're a new apprentice, you could get into trouble. I'll go with you," he said. Frostpaw sighed. "Alright," she said.

The two cats made their way to the Leafclan border. "What does catmint look like?" Frostpaw asked. Orangefang sighed. "See why you needed me?" He asked. Frostpaw nodded.

"Will she get better?" Frostpaw asked. Ravenfeather sighed. "I believe she should, but I'm not the one to say. Only Starclan can decide her fate," she answered.

Chapter 4

Frostkit looked around. The scent of a fresh mouse had caught her attention, and she looked over to see it in the middle of a field, nibbling on a nut. She was ready. She could catch this. She dropped into a hunting crouch.

How do I know the hunting crouch? I haven't even learned or seen it before! She thought to herself.

She gently walked forward only to step on a twig, alerting the mouse of her presence. It looked at her with its big, black, beady eyes and bolted.

Frostpaw raced after it. She was determined to sink her teeth into its juicy flesh.

She was catching up fast. When she was about a tail length away, it suddenly jumped, revealing a cliff in front of her. She was too late to stop herself and plummeted into it.

She was falling, and fast, too. The mouse had disappeared. It was just her falling out of the dark sky around her. *I'm going to die,* she thought to herself wearily.

She neared the ground, and she finally hit it, but she didn't feel any pain. She *wasn't* dead.

She got up on her paws and looked straight forward. In front of her was a large tree full of green leaves. The leaves withered away quickly and fell off as if time was speeding up, but one leaf remained untouched.

It finally fell off the tree and sailed over Frostpaw's head. She turned around and watched as it hit the ground and seemed to mend into it.

Frostpaw suddenly felt cold air behind her back. She turned around

to find that the tree had disappeared, and a small hill, more like a lump, with flowers surrounding it took its place. Standing on the hill was Windstripe.

"Mom!" Frostpaw shouted, smiling. Windstripe looked better and healthier than she had seen her in the medicine den. She spoke up.

"Leaves will join the ground, and frost will cover the rest."

Windstripe began to fade away. "Wait, mom, don't go!" Frostpaw called out.

It was too late. Once she disappeared, frost began to cover the area, starting from the back of the hill to the front it. It quickly grew towards Frostpaw, and she didn't have time to back away before it had grown up her legs and frozen her.

"Frostpaw!"

Frostpaw opened her eyes, the cold stinging her face. It was just a dream.

She looked around for where the voice came from and noticed Ravenfeather standing in front of her. "Frostpaw!" She called again.

"What it is that you have to wake me up in the middle of the night?" Frostpaw complained. Ravenfeather looked annoyed.

"It's your mother. I'm sorry, Frostpaw, but she passed in her sleep last night."

Frostpaw couldn't say anything. Her mind was racing, and the world seemed to be spinning. She couldn't believe that her mother had died.

"W-where is she?" She stuttered. "Her body is in the medicine den. Greenpaw is waiting there already," Ravenfeather responded.

Frostkit wearily got up and made her way to the medicine den. She looked through the entrance to see Greenpaw licking Windstripe's body. She turned to face Frostpaw as she noticed her coming in.

"Frostpaw..." She started. Frostpaw shook her head. "I know," she said. She slowly walked over to Windstripe's carcass and settled down by it. She began to lick it, grooming her body.

"Goodbye, mother," she whispered. She noticed that her body looked terrible compared to what it looked like in her dream. If only she could have said goodbye to her mother in her dream...

A thought suddenly occurred to her.
"Ravenfeather," Frostpaw started. "Yeah?" Ravenfeather asked.

"Can I speak to you? In private?" Frostpaw asked.

Ravenfeather nodded, a hint of interest in her eyes.

They walked out of the den. The camp was still asleep. "What is it?" Ravenfeather asked.

"Well... I had a dream last night," Frostpaw answered truthfully. Ravenfeather leaned in closer.

"I was hunting a mouse, and then I was falling, and there was something about leaves falling and frost and trees... But the whole point is that I saw Windstripe," Frostpaw confessed.

Ravenfeather looked concerned. "When did you see her?" She asked.

"Near the end of the dream."

Ravenfeather had a stern expression that was also full of question. "Did she say anything to you?" She asked.

"Yeah..." Frostpaw started,"she said something like 'Leaves will join the ground, and frost will cover the rest,' or at least I think..."

Ravenfeather cut her off. "Frostpaw," she started. Frostpaw noticed the soft but stern tone in her voice and immediately knew that what she was going to say was serious.

"Frostpaw, Windstripe came to you from Starclan in you sleep. That was a message from Starclan."

Frostpaw was surprised. "What does it mean?" She asked. "And why did they give it to me?"

Ravenfeather looked down, deep in thought. "I'm not sure," she confessed, "but I'll have to look into it. You and Greenpaw should get some sleep. We'll bury Windstripe's carcass in the morning."

Frostpaw nodded and walked to the den. She layed down on the comfortable bedding as Greenpaw walked in.

"So, we only have dad left, huh?" She said. Frostpaw nodded.

"I'm too tired to think," she said. Greenpaw nodded and layed down by her to comfort her. Frostpaw closed her eyes and immediately fell asleep.

Chapter 5

"All cats old enough to hunt their own prey gather under the lichenrock for a clan meeting!"

Brightstar's words echoed through the camp, sending the cats out of their dens for the meeting. Most of them immediately spotted something that told them what the meeting was about.

In the center of the camp, under the lichenrock, was Windstripe's dead body.

"Cats of Pineclan," Brightstar began, "last night, Windstripe, one of our beloved queens, passed away due to Greencough. May Starclan guide her to her place, and may they take good care of her."

The cats, saddened by Windstripe's death, began to groom her body gently as a last farewell. Frostpaw and Greenpaw stood to the side with Stonefang, staring at her silently.

"Frostpaw, Greenpaw," Ravenfeather began, walking up to them, "it's time to bury her. Missingfang and I have already dug up a hole outside of camp."

Frostpaw silently nodded and walked with Greenpaw and Ravenfeather to pick up her body. They dragged it out of camp, set it in the hole, and covered it up with the dirt around it.

When Frostpaw and Greenpaw returned to camp, they discovered that the clan meeting was over, and the cats had returned to their dens to eat and hide from the cold.

Frostpaw gently padded over to the fresh-kill pile and picked up a skinny mouse. Prey seemed to be getting scarce, especially this late in leafbare.

She brought it over to her den, sat down, and began nibbling it. She was hungry, but she was too tired to eat.

Brightstar walked into the den. "Frostpaw, it's time for training. I know you're still grieving about Windstripe's death, but prey is getting scarce, and you need to learn how to help hunt," he said.

Frostpaw leapt up on her feet. Yes, she was still sad about her mother's death, but she was going to finally learn how to hunt!

Brightstar motioned for her to follow him out of camp with a flick of his tail. Frostpaw quickly followed, and before she knew it, they were stopped in front of a decently sized tree.

"This is where you will be training every morning. Today, as you know, we will begin the hunting crouch, stance, and attack. Follow my moves," Brightstar ordered.

He bent his limbs to where he was crouched to the ground and gently lifted one paw up to walk forward, switching between them as he slowly moved. He nodded to Frostpaw, and she attempted to copy his moves.

She lowered herself to the ground until she was leveled with her leader, and she slowly began to stalk forward, as he had shown her.

"Good," Brightstar said, standing up. "That is your hunting crouch and stance. Next, you will learn the attack, for when you actually are hunting prey. Watch closely."

He lowered himself into the hunting crouch again, stalked forward, and suddenly halted as he looked at a stick, acting as if it were a mouse. He crept forward a few more paces, stopped, waited for the right moment, and finally pounced on top of it and gripped it in his teeth.

"That is how you catch prey," he said, dropping the stick. "Now you try with another stick."

Frostpaw looked around and spotted one sticking out the snow. She lowered herself into the hunting crouch, stalked forward, and kept her eyes on it, waiting. Finally, she pounced. When she gripped it in her teeth, she tried to pull up, but tumbled over as she realized it was a root, not a stick.

Brightstar laughed. "You did it correctly, but that's a root," he teased. "I know, I know," Frostpaw responded.

Brightstar spent the rest of the morning with Frostpaw, teaching her about scents, perfect times to catch certain prey, and waiting.

"Now you try catching your first prey," Brightstar finally said after a while. Frostpaw nodded and raised her nose into the air.

She immediately smelled the scent of a magpie. She located it sitting in the snow, dropped into the hunting crouch, and hid behind some bushes. This was her chance. There was a chance it would fly away, but if she waited for the right moment, she could get it before it even noticed her.

Frostpaw leapt out of the bushes and pounced on it, pinning it down by its wings. She sank her teeth into it, picked it up, and dropped it in front of Brightstar, who looked pleased.

"Good job!" He congratulated. Frostpaw smiled. "Now, bring it back to camp. That will conclude our training for the day," Brightstar ordered. Frostpaw nodded and made her way back to camp.

"So," Owlpaw started, sitting by Tawnypaw and Frostpaw, "you caught your first prey today?"

Frostpaw nodded. "It was a magpie. I gave it to Missingfang," she responded. Tawnypaw smiled pleasantly.

"What have you been doing, Tawnypaw?" Owlpaw asked.

Tawnypaw lowered into a crouch and swiped one paw forward, his tail lashing. "Oh, you've been practicing fighting?" Frostpaw asked.

Leapordpaw walked in. "He's already learned to hunt, so he's been working on fighting techniques," he said.

Frostpaw frowned. *I guess I'm behind in training,* she thought.

Just then, Orangefang walked through the den entrance. "Frostpaw

and Leapordpaw, you're to go on the afternoon hunting patrol with Stonefang, Brightstar, and Redpelt. Get ready," he said. Then he left to go talk to others.

Chapter 6

Frostpaw stood by Leapordpaw and Brightstar. This was her first hunting patrol, and patrol in general. "You ready?" Brightstar asked Frostpaw. She nodded.

Leapordpaw stood by Frostpaw. "Is this your first hunting patrol, too?" He asked. Frostpaw nodded.

Brightstar began to move out, the others close behind. Frostpaw took in the scents around her. *Mouse,* she thought.

The group moved slow, and Frostpaw quietly alerted them that she scented a mouse. She dropped into a hunting crouch and pounced on it at the right moment, picking it up in her jaws and burying it under a tree to get when she would get back.

"Good job, Frostpaw. We'll get prey along the way, bury it, and go to our decided hunting spot. Then we'll get it on the way back," Brightstar informed. Frostpaw and the others nodded then continued to walk.

"Where will we hunt?" Redpelt asked. Stonefang butted in. "I was thinking we could hunt at the Leafclan border. We could pick up more catmint while we're there," he said. Brightstar nodded. "Good idea."

The group made their way to the Leafclan border. Only one cat branched off for a moment to snatch a dove, buried it, then got back to the group.

When they made it to the Leafclan border, the group spread out, digging into holes to try and scare out any hibernating prey.

They didn't catch much for the first hour.

"We should start heading back now and let the evening patrol get the rest," Redpelt suggested, shivering a few times from the cold.

"Maybe. We caught enough prey to feed half the clan for the day, so I'd say we can start heading back. Leapordpaw, do you have the catmint?" Brightstar asked.

Leapordpaw smiled and nodded, the catmint clenched in his teeth. "Let's go," he mewed, the words muffled in his mouth.

As the group began to head back, Stonefang stopped. His ears swiveled around his head and pointed behind him as if he were listening to something. "Stonefang? What is it?" Brightstar asked.

Stonefang shook his head. "Oh... It's nothing, I just thought I heard something. You guys go ahead, I'm going to grab some more catmint before we go," he said. Brightstar nodded and headed back with the group, picking up the buried prey along the way.

"How was the hunt?" Greenpaw asked as Frostpaw and Leapordpaw returned. "Oh, it was interesting. We went to the Leafclan border to hunt. I caught a mouse and a vole, and Leapordpaw picked up some more catmint while we were there," Frostpaw responded.

Just as Greenpaw was about to respond, Jaysong, one of the old queens, walked into the apprentices' den. "I think you guys would like to know that Ivystorm just had her kits," she informed.

Frostpaw immediately jumped to her feet and rushed out of the den and to the nursery. She halted in front of the entrance as Ravenfeather climbed out. "Be quiet when you go in there," she warned. Frostpaw nodded and slipped through the nursery entrance.

Ivystorm was laying on some fern bedding with two beautiful kits curled up by her, suckling. "Hi, Frostpaw," she greeted.

"Ivystorm, how are the kits?" Frostpaw asked in a hushed voice. Ivystorm nodded and responded, "They're good. They're both female."

"Have you decided on their names yet?" Frostpaw asked. Ivystorm nodded. She looked at a pure, dark brown kit who was gently

asleep. "This one is Volekit," she said. Frostpaw smiled at the sweet name.

"And the other one is Spiderkit," Ivystorm informed. The other kit was pure black with brown markings on her. "She looks just like Orangefang... Is he the father?" Frostpaw asked. Ivystorm nodded.

"I bet they'll become strong, beautiful warriors one day," Frostpaw added.

"Thank you."

Frostpaw smiled, nodded, and walked out of the nursery.

As she exited, she saw Stonefang walk into camp. Frostpaw frowned as she noticed he wasn't carrying any catmint. She walked up to him and confronted him.

"Stonefang," Frostpaw started. He turned his attention to her.

"What?"

"Where have you been?"

"I was collecting catmint."

Frostpaw sighed. "Then where is the catmint?" Stonefang blushed. "Uh, well... Why does it matter to you? You shouldn't be bothering a warrior and his duties!" He responded, walking away.

Frostpaw scowled. She wasn't too happy with what she discovered. Her own father just lied to her and called her out for messing with a warrior's business when she was a rank lower than him.

She sighed and walked off.

Chapter 7

The cold nibbled at Frostpaw's feet as she opened her eyes. She was laying in the apprentices' den, curled up comfortably. The days had been getting colder, and Greencough was spreading around camp. She luckily hadn't gotten it yet, but at least two cats, including her mother, had died from it already.

Frostpaw stretched and walked out of the den to see the camp awake. Cats were eating, sleeping, and talking to eachother in worried tones.

"Frostpaw!"

Frostpaw turned around to find Leapordpaw and Tawnypaw walking up to her, followed closely by Tigerheart, their mentor. "What is it?" Frostpaw asked.

Tigerheart looked concerned. "Brightstar has caught a case of Greencough, so he can't mentor you for a while. According to Orangefang's orders, you'll be training with us until he gets better," he said.

Frostpaw's heart sank. "Alright," she grumbled. "We're going out to train with hunting today," Tigerheart said. "Meet us at the Great Rocks."

"Now, since Frostpaw hasn't learned the fighting stance and attacks yet, we'll be reviewing them today," Tigerheart ordered.

Tigerheart's a jerk, Frostpaw thought. Tigerheart's orange pelt gleamed in the sun as he positioned himself in the fighting stance. "Frostpaw, can you do it?" He asked.

Frostpaw nodded and attempted to position herself to mimic Tigerheart's stance. He eyed her as she did it, and then nodded.

"Correct," he said. Frostpaw smiled.

"Now, Tawnypaw, Leapordpaw, can you show Frostpaw how to attack?" He asked. They nodded, shifted into their attacking poses, and lunged at eachother, claws sheathed so they could not hurt each other.

"Now, Frostpaw, you try attacking me," he said. Frostpaw sighed and dropped into the crouch. She waited for the right moment as if she were hunting and struck.

Tigerheart was ready. He jumped out of the way right in time and stood over Frostpaw. "Now, if you would just learn your enemies' tactics..."

Frostpaw angrily lunged at him and knocked him on his back. When she got off of him, it took him a minute to get up. "Yep," he groaned, "good work."

Tawnypaw and Leapordpaw burst out with laughter. "She sure showed you you!" Leapordpaw exclaimed, Tawnypaw still chucking with no sound. Frostpaw smiled as Tigerheart shook himself.

"You think you know basic fighting? Well, let's see if you can dodge this!" He exclaimed, lunging at her. Frostpaw tried to jump up and over him, but Tigerheart slid under her and launched her across the clearing with both legs.

Frostpaw landed with a hard *thud!* She looked back to see Tawnypaw and Leapordpaw running towards her, followed closely by Tigerheart, who wore an expression of guilt and worry on his face.

She didn't even have time to register that she saw blood before blacking out.

Frostpaw regained consciousness. She didn't know what had happened, only that things went dark after training with Tigerheart.

Muffled voices were heard, and she dared not to open her eyes, for

she might just miss out on a good opportunity to ease-drop into a conversation.

"But what can we do? Brightstar is-"

"Brightstar will be fine. He still has two lives left, after all. No need to worry."

"What about the other clans? They've been struggling for food, and only Starclan knows when they'll demand for territory again."

"Everything will be fine! We were set to wait here until Ravenfeather returns! Besides, I'm sure we'll all settle this at the next Gathering."

The argument was getting heated. Frostpaw heard footsteps in the doorway and blinked her eyes open to see who it was, giving up the act.

It was Ravenfeather.

"I have terrible news," she said. "Brightstar lost another life."

The room grew silent. "Will I tell the clan at the next meeting?"

It was Orangefang, one of the cats in the argument.

Ravenfeather spoke up, "No need. There are signs that Brightstar will be better, and will be able to go to the next Gathering, too."

Frostpaw jerked her head out of surprise, the sound of the moving ferns under her alerting the others.

Tigerheart stepped up to her. Apparently, he was one of the cats in the den, too.

"Frostpaw! Are you okay? I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you that bad!" He apologized.

Frostpaw shook her head, stopping when she realized how woozy it made her feel. "It's okay, really. I was the one who brought out that tactic in the first place," she said.

Tigerheart lowered his head. "You were a good fighter, though."

"Thanks."

Ravenfeather stepped in between them. "Frostpaw," she interrupted. "I have some news."

Frostpaw perked her ears up. "What?" She already knew about Brightstar, so she tried to act interested.

"Brightstar lost another life from Greencough this evening."

Frostpaw lowered her eyebrows, attempting to show sadness. Yes, she was deeply moved by the terrible news, but her heart already sank when she first overheard it.

"Also," Ravenfeather added, gaining Frostpaw's attention, "You have a small head injury. When you landed during training, you hit your head hard and got a nosebleed, too."

Frostpaw was relieved that the injury wasn't too bad. At least Brightstar was getting better.

"When will I resume training?" She asked. "A few nights from now, Brightstar should be able to step back in," Ravenfeather informed. Frostpaw nodded and looked outside. It was late at night, so she laid her head down and immediately fell asleep.

Chapter 8

"All cats old enough to hunt their own prey, gather around the lichenrock for a clan meeting," Brightstar called out. Frostpaw walked over with Greenpaw to where all the cats were gathering, the setting sunlight gleaming on every cat's pelt.

"Today," Brightstar began, "we have two new warriors joining us. Leapordpaw, please step up."

Leapordpaw stepped up proudly, the excitement practically shining off of his face.

"Leapordpaw," Brightstar started, "You have completed your training as an apprentice, and you are now ready to move on as a warrior. Do you promise to uphold the warrior code, even at the cost of your life?"

"Yes," Leapordpaw responded.

"Then from this day forward, you will be known as Leapordfang. Please sit in silence for your vigil tonight."

The clan cheered his name. "Leapordfang! Leapordfang!" They chanted.

Frostpaw felt a little bit jealous. She knew they had been apprentices long before her, but she would still miss hanging out with them at nights. A warm feeling crept up her stomach at the thought of hanging out with Leapordfang.

Brightstar silenced the clan again. "We have another apprentice becoming a warrior this evening. Tawnypaw, please step forward."

Tawnypaw excitedly stepped forward, sucking in his chest to look brave.

"Tawnypaw," Brightstar began, "You have completed your training as an apprentice, and you are now ready to move on as a warrior.

Do you promise to uphold the warrior code, even at the cost of your life?"

Tawnypaw nodded his head, his eyes glued to Brightstar's.

"Then from this day forward, you will be addressed as Tawnynose. Please sit in silence for your vigil tonight."

The clan cheered. "Tawnynose! Leapordfang! Tawnynose! Leapordfang!" They chanted.

The two new warriors walked up onto the lichenrock, watching as the sun began to set.

"With that being said, the Gathering is tonight," Brightstar continued. "The cats I will take with me tonight are Orangefang, Ravenfeather, Stonefang, Tigerheart, Redpelt, Frostpaw, and Owlpaw. Clan dismissed."

Frostpaw's heart leapt with joy. Her first Gathering! The group of cats who were going began to cluster into a group by Brightstar at the camp entrance.

Frostpaw slowly walked over there, but she delayed for a small moment to look at Leapordfang and Tawnynose standing vigil on the lichenrock. Her two friends were finally warriors, and she felt proud for them.

Her eyes briefly locked with Leapordfang's before breaking away. She quickly trotted over to the rest of the group.

"So, are we all set?" Brightstar called out. The cats in the group looked around briefly to make sure every cat was there. Murmurs of "yes" rang through the crowd, and plenty of nods occurred. Brightstar nodded. "Then let's go."

The cats traveled quickly through the forest, jumping over logs and tree roots. Frostpaw ran alongside Owlpaw, talking.

"Didn't you go to the last Gathering?" She asked him. Owlpaw nodded. "Yeah. Not much occurred, though. Just stuff like scarce prey and boring territory rules, like always."

Frostpaw gave a brief nod. The group was traveling to where all clans met at every gathering: The Meeting Pond.

The Meeting Pond was a beautiful pond in the center of the forest with a large rock in it. Starclan put lily pads and rocks around it to give easy access to the center rock for the clans.

The group stopped as they reached their destination. "We're here," Brightstar said. Frostpaw could hear the voices of other cats and smell the scent of Leafclan and Gorgeclan. "Wait for the signal," Owlpaw reminded her.

Brightstar suddenly lashed his tail to signal that the clan could enter. The cats dashed through the bramble and into the Meeting Pond area, the clearing that surrounded it.

Frostpaw couldn't believe her eyes. The Meeting Pond was as beautiful as she thought. Since it was the coldest times in leafbare, the pond was frozen over with thick ice. The moonlight glistened on it, dazzling it with the reflection of the stars. Tons of cats were gathered around the area, mingling and greeting each other.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Go meet some new cats!" Owlpaw said. Frostpaw nodded and walked into the clearing, her eyes searching for other friendly apprentices. Her nose was full of the different scents of the other clans.

"Hi!"

Frostpaw turned around quickly to see a small, orange apprentice with big, blue eyes staring at her. "My name is Honeypaw. How are you today?"

Frostpaw didn't know what to say. "I-I'm good, thanks for asking. My name is Frostpaw," she finally responded.

"Is this your first time here?" Honeypaw asked. Frostpaw nodded. "It's my second time here. Fallenstar always says to be kind and greet others nicely," Honeypaw said. Frostpaw smiled.

Without notice, a large, black warrior came trotting up to them. Honeypaw looked a bit worried, but Frostpaw made sure to look

tough. "Honeypaw," the warrior said, "nice to meet you again." He had a grouchy voice, and his huge muscles didn't help satisfy that fact.

The warrior noticed Frostpaw. "Well, hi there! My name is Blackclaw. Who are you?" He greeted. Frostpaw said nothing.

Blackclaw laughed. "So you're new, aren'tchya? Don't worry. I'm from Gorgeclan, and Honeypaw is from Leafclan."

"We met at the last Gathering," Honeypaw added. Frostpaw smiled. "My name is Frostpaw, and I'm from Pineclan. It's nice to meet you two!" She greeted.

The two other cats smiled. Before they could say anything, though, a loud yowl was heard above the crowd. Every cat directed their attention to the rock in the middle of the Meeting Pond, where the three clan leaders, Brightstar, Fallenstar, and Lichenstar, were standing boldly.

"Let us begin the Gathering!" Fallenstar called out. "We will start with Leafclan, my clan." Some of the cats in the crowd smiled, and Frostpaw immediately knew that they must be Leafclan cats.

"Leafclan has been going through some troubles. We have lost four cats due to Greencough, and prey has been getting more scarce. Not only that, but I'm not satisfied to say that our patrol members caught Gorgeclan hunting on our grounds, and we've smelled a Pineclan cat on our territory."

The Gorgeclan cats sneered, denying the fact. "Then I will have a word with my warriors," Lichenstar replied. Brightstar nodded, signaling the same message.

Fallenstar continued, "If we catch any of you trespassing on our territory without permission, we will not hesitate to attack. Every clan is in need of food right now, and I say we keep it to ourselves."

The cats in the crowd nodded with respect, and Frostpaw did the same, unsure of what exactly she should be doing.

"This ends our discussion on Leafclan," Fallenstar closed.

"Brightstar, would you like to go next?"

Brightstar nodded and stepped forward, letting Fallenstar back up. "Cats of all clans," Brightstar started, "Pineclan has been doing fine enough. Prey is scarce for us, but our excellent warriors and apprentices seem to handle it fine. We have had two cats die of Greencough, but we just received two new warriors. We also have had some new kits born, raising our population."

Frostpaw noticed that he left out the fact that he lost a life. But when she thought about it, maybe it was a good idea that he left it out. If the other clans knew that he had one life left, they might attack.

"That is all we have to say about Pineclan. Lichenstar, you may go," Brightstar said. Lichenstar rudely pushed past him as he backed up, standing tall and bold at the front of the rock.

"We, Gorgeclan, only have one thing to say," Lichenstar started. He turned to Brightstar. "We demand you give us the Great Rocks. We are the strongest clan, therefore, we deserve the prey that live in those rocks."

"Never!" Brightstar yelled at him. "Starclan gave us the Great Rocks, and we will never share our territory with you. You don't deserve a single blade of grass of our territory."

The Pineclan and Gorgeclan cats snarled and hissed at eachother, all excpet for Frostpaw and Blackclaw, who were sitting there awkwardly.

"Fine, then," Lichenstar began. "We demand a piece of your territory from all of you, or we won't think twice about attacking your clans! Do you hear me? I'll give you all until the next Gathering to make up your mind. Surely with one clan down, the other two clans can gain more prey."

At this point, the cats were literally spitting and hissing and yelling at eachother, giving threatening messages to back off.

"Gorgeclan, out!" Lichenstar said, his grey fur slick in the moonlight

as he jumped down the rock and to his clan. The Gorgeclan cats flooded out.

Brightstar and Fallenstar looked at eachother before parting ways and calling their clans back.

Chapter 9

Frostpaw stalked through the forest, the scents of many prey filling the air. Leafbare was beginning to end, bringing the times of newleaf around to call out the prey. The clan would be well fed.

She stalked towards where the scent of a mouse was bringing her. Peering around in a hunting crouch, she finally spotted it, nibbling on a small seed.

She hid behind a bramble patch, watching it carefully. It hadn't moved, but instead stayed in the same position as it eagerly cracked the seed.

Frostpaw pounced. The mouse didn't have time to react before she was already on top of it, pinning it down and sinking her fangs into its flesh. She picked it up and brought it to a spot under a tree where she burried another prey.

She was on assessment. So far, she had caught five prey, all burried underground in somewhat different positions than the rest.

I have to prove myself worthy to be a warrior, she thought to herself. She wondered where Brightstar was. He was probably hiding in a bush somewhere, watching her carefully.

She was right. Brightstar had pounced out from behind a tree, pinning her down. Frostpaw picked up her hind legs and kicked him across the clearing, slamming him into a tree. She walked up to him, claws still unsheathed.

"Good work," he said, getting up and shaking himself off. "You reacted well to an attack. Your assessment is over; gather your prey and bring them back to camp."

Frostpaw nodded. She wandered over to the spots where she had burried the other prey, picked them up, and brought them to camp, her mouth watering.

"Frostpaw!"

Frostpaw turned around to see Leapordfang and Tawnynose running up to them. "How was the assessment?" Leapordfang asked.

Frostpaw nodded. "I think I did well. I caught five prey and managed to survive an attack from Brightstar," she responded. Tawnynose smiled. Leapordfang took some of the prey that Frostpaw had dropped and picked it up. "Here, let me help you carry it to the fresh kill pile."

The two cats made their way to the fresh kill pile, Tawnynose close behind them. They dropped the prey in the pile and grabbed their own pieces for them.

As Frostpaw sat down by Leapordfang, Tawnynose, Greenpaw, and Owlpaw, she noticed something missing. Something was not right. It felt as if something had disappeared, like a cat with no claws.

Then it dawned on her. She stood up and searched around frantically. "What's wrong?" Owlpaw asked. Frostpaw answered unhesitantly, "I can't find Stonefang!"

"He probably went out on the evening patrol," Greenpaw suggested, a hint of worry in her voice.

As she said that, the evening patrol arrived. Tawnynose shook his head as he noticed no sign of Stonefang.

"Where could he have gone?" Leapordfang asked. Frostpaw began to walk over to Brightstar's den. "I have to talk to Brightstar about this," she called behind her.

She stopped in front of the den entrance. "May I come in?" She asked. "Yes," Brightstar responded.

The room was dark and quiet when Frostpaw walked in. "What do you need?" Brightstar asked. Orangefang was sitting by him, making Frostpaw feel guilty that she might have interrupted a conversation.

"I can't find Stonefang," she blurted out. Brightstar and Orangefang looked at her for a second. "Now that I think about it, he didn't

come back from the Gathering last night... I thought he was just doing some night hunting," Orangefang responded.

Brightstar sighed. "I know what happened to him," he said. Frostpaw's heart leapt. "Where is he?" She asked.

"I'll let you know along with the clan later tonight," Brightstar said. "Oh, also, your warrior ceremony is at the same time," he added.

"All cats old enough to catch their own prey, gather under the lichenrock for a clan meeting," Brightstar called out among the clan. The cats gathered around the lichenrock, sitting down to eagerly hear what Brightstar needed to say.

"Tonight, we have three apprentices becoming warriors. Frostpaw, please step up."

Frostpaw held back her excitement as she walked up, pride shining in her eyes.

"Frostpaw," Brightstar started, "You have completed your training as an apprentice, and you are now ready to move on as a warrior. Do you promise to uphold the warrior code, even at the cost of your life?"

Frostpaw nodded. "I do," she stated boldly.

"Then from this day forward, you will be known as Frostsong. Please sit in silence for your vigil tonight."

Frostsong couldn't believe it. She was finally a warrior! And her name sounded terrific, too!

Brightstar called Greenpaw up. "Greenpaw," he began, "You have completed your training as an apprentice, and you are now ready to move on as a warrior. Do you promise to uphold the warrior code, even at the cost of your life?"

Greenpaw nodded, her excitement shining like stars in her eyes.

"Then from this day forward, you will be known as Greengaze. Please sit in silence for your vigil tonight."

Greengaze stepped back with her sister, her head held high in pride.

"Finally, we have our last apprentice becoming a warrior tonight. Owlpaw, please step up," Brightstar ordered.

Owlpaw stepped forward to meet eyes with Brightstar. "Owlpaw, you have completed your training as an apprentice, and you are now ready to move on as a warrior. Do you promise to uphold the warrior code, even at the cost of your life?" He called out.

"Yes," Owlpaw responded.

"Then from this day forward, you will be known as Owlflight. Please sit in silence for your vigil tonight."

Owlflight nodded and stepped back, stopping and sitting by Greengaze.

"Finally, we have one more thing to discuss tonight," Brightstar called out. "Some of you may have noticed the disappearance of Stonefang."

The clan began mumbling to eachother, some agreeing and others surprised.

Brightstar flicked his tail, silencing the clan. "Sadly, he has decided to leave our clan and join Leafclan."

Brightstar's words boomed among the clan, ringing and constantly echoing in Frostsong's ears. Her head began to spin. Did her father really leave his only children to join Leafclan?

"This news concludes our meeting. If you have any other questions, please speak to Orangefang and I privately. Clan dismissed," Brightstar said. He jumped down the lichenrock and walked into his den, followed by other cats attempting to talk to him.

Frostsong, Greengaze, and Owlflight made their way to the top of the lichenrock to sit in vigil. Owlflight was smiling at them while

Greengaze slightly smiled back, but then dipped her head and stared at the camp.

The wind blew against Frostsong's fur, surprisingly warm as newleaf brought an end to the cold. Her attention was fixed on the forest, mainly towards Leafclan.

Her father was somewhere over there, probably trying to fit in the best he could. *Why did he leave?* Frostsong thought to herself. He wouldn't have left without reason. *Why did he go, and what is he hiding?*

Chapter 10

Frostsong sat in the warrior's den, carefully eating a thrush. She was happy with her new den, and she enjoyed the comfortable moss bedding underneath her. The sun was shining through the entrance, warming her.

"Hey, Frostsong."

Frostsong looked up to find that Leapordfang and Tawnynose had entered the den. "You wanna go hunting?"

"Sure," Frostsong replied. She gulped down a few more bites, picked up the rest of the thrush, and brought it to Greengaze. "You can finish it," she said. Greengaze nodded in thanks and began to tear into the remains of it.

"Where will we go?" Frostsong asked Leapordfang as they began to walk out of the camp entrance. "I was thinking the Great Rocks. Prey is starting to come out more, and we should catch some, as we have the chance," he responded. Frostsong nodded.

They began to walk, and Frostsong sometimes felt Leapordfang brush against her pelt comfortingly. It felt nice.

As they neared Great Rocks, close to the Gorgeclan border, Frostsong caught a whiff of vole. She immediately dropped into a hunting crouch and stalked to a large rock. The scent was coming from behind it.

She jumped up at the right moment and disappeared behind the rock, popping up quickly with a dead vole in her mouth. Leapordfang laughed.

"Your hunting skills are good," he commented. Frostsong smiled. "Thanks."

"Anyway, I've been meaning to talk to you... In private," he said,

shooting a glance at the smiling Tawnynose who followed. Tawnynose grinned and ran after a squirrel.

"What do you need?" Frostsong asked. "Well..." Leapordfang began, "... Remember the first day you became an apprentice?"

"Yeah."

"That day was meaningful to me. When I first saw you... I felt something. I mean, you're really good at hunting and fighting, and you're really beautiful..."

Frostsong flushed.

"I mean, did I say that?" Leapordfang quickly corrected himself. Frostsong laughed.

"Anyway, my point is... Well... Do you want to be my mate?" Leapordfang blurted out, embarrassment shining in his eyes.

Frostsong smiled. "Of course! You've been my best friend since I met you!" She exclaimed.

Leapordfang smiled and intertwined his tail with hers. "I love you!" He exclaimed.

A rustling in the bush interrupted their moment. Frostsong and Leapordfang quickly turned their heads towards the Gorgeclan border. "I don't think we're alone... We need to go," Leapordfang said.

One moon later

"Cats of all clans! It is time we start the Gathering!" Fallenstar's voice rose above the crowd, silencing them instantly.

Before anyone could start, Lichenstar stepped forward. "Well?" He asked. "Have you made your decisions?"

Fallenstar sighed. "As leader of Leafclan, I have made my choice.

Leafclan will give the mist fields to Gorgeclan."

Yowls of protest rose from the crowd. "Are you insane?" A cat yelled, immediately backing down as Fallenstar shot a glare at the cat.

"You have made the right choice, Fallenstar," Lichenstar said, grinning. "As for you, Brightstar. What is your decision?"

Brightstar scowled. "We will never give you any of our territory, not one bit!" He yelled.

"Fine, then. Good luck keeping your clan."

The Gorgeclan and Pineclan cats hissed and scolded at eachother in the clearing. Frostsong and Blackclaw looked at eachother wearily, Leapordfang shooting glances at Blackclaw every once and a while.

"Lichenstar, you cannot take any of our clan. You can't take something that isn't yours. Pineclan, return to camp," Brightstar called out, jumping off of the rock in the center of the pond. The Pineclan cats moved out behind him.

Chapter 11

Two moons later

Frostsong woke up one morning. She looked around the warrior den. Leapordfang was standing by her, nudging her to get up. "Frostsong, get up! We're moving you to the nursery today!" He exclaimed.

Frostsong wasn't surprised. She already knew that she was expecting Leapordfang's kits. She got up and stretched, hunger filling her as she weakly walked out of the den.

Ivystorm was already collecting some moss. "I'm helping you with your bedding, Frostsong," she declared, as if Frostsong was going to object. She shrugged. She walked out of camp with her to the nearest tree, and began shredding moss from it.

"Is this a good amount?" Ivystorm asked. Frostsong nodded. "Let's head back."

As they entered the camp, Frostsong brought up a conversation. "So, when are your kits going to become apprentices?" She asked. Ivystorm replied, "I think in a month." Frostsong nodded.

She picked up the moss, walked into the nursery, and began spreading it out to her comfort. She then layed down to rest, for the days ahead of her would be tiring.

Hey guys! It's Eily here. Just wanted to note that I'm not going to be describing the process of Frostsong giving birth, because it makes me a bit uncomfortable attempting to write it. I'm gonna just skip to after the birth of the kits. Anyway, keep reading, and... Idk, have fun?

Frostsong layed in the nursery, looking at her four kits wearily. They were beautiful, and Ravenfeather had said that two of them were she-cats, and two were toms.

Leapordsong walked in. "Frostsong, how are you? How are the kits?"

Frostsong smiled. "I'm fine, and so are they." "Have you decided on names for them, yet?" He asked. Frostsong nodded.

She motioned to a grey calico cat with green eyes. "This one will be named Mottledkit. She's a she-cat." The patterns on Mottledkit's back were spotty, and the colors mixed well with her main fur color.

"What about this one?" Leapordfang asked, looking at a pure black tom with a lighter grey paws. "His name is Shadowkit," she said before adding, "His colors must have come from one of your parents." Leapordfang smiled.

"What's this one's name?" Leapordfang asked. He looked at another kit that seemed to replicate Mottledkit, but its back spots hinted to a more rosy pattern, and its eyes were amber.

"Her name is Rosekit," Frostsong announced. Leapordfang smiled, then looked at another kit, a tom. He was silver with black stripes running down him, almost a duplicate of Frostsong.

"I've decided that you should name him," Frostsong said. Leapordfang smiled. "Then his name will be Northkit," he said. Frostsong smiled. "I like it."

The four kits were crowded around Frostsong, suckling. Volekit and Spiderkit were looking at them from outside the den, excited for their new denmates.

Frostsong was smiling as she began to drift asleep. *My beautiful kits...* She thought to herself. She then closed her eyes and succumbed to sleep.

Chapter 12

Five moons later

"Mom! Mom! We're all so close to becoming apprentices! I can't wait!" Rosekit squealed, running up to Frostsong with Mottledkit, Shadowkit, and Northkit behind her.

"I know. I bet you'll all make great warriors when you complete training!" Frostsong exaggerated, making her kits bounce with excitement. Leapordfang walked up.

"Frostsong, I need to talk to you," he said. Frostsong nodded. "Why don't you all go see Greengaze and talk to her? I bet she'll have tons of time to play with you!" She told her kits. They squealed and ran over to Greengaze, practically trampling her. Frostsong then walked out of the nursery to sit down with Leapordfang.

"What is it?" She asked him in a quiet tone. Leapordfang looked concerned. "It's been five moons, and Gorgeclan still hasn't attacked us. What do you think they're waiting for? What are they plotting?" He asked.

"Calm down, Leapordfang. If it's been almost six moons now from the threat, then maybe they were just trying to scare us. Lichenstar wouldn't really do something like that, would he?" Frostsong reassured her mate. Leapordfang shook his head.

"I'm not sure, but I have a bad feeling about it. He hasn't brought up any more conversation about the attack at any of the last Gatherings. What do you think he's doing?" Leapordfang wondered aloud.

"Leapordfang, stop worrying! If you're that worried about it, go talk to Brightstar. But my guess is, once again, he is just trying to scare us. We can't live in fear our whole lives as we wait for an attack," Frostsong said.

"I don't know..." Leapordfang began. Frostsong sighed. "Please go talk to someone else about it! Tawnynose looks like he might want his ears to fall off from chattering," she said.

Leapordfang sighed. "Fine. But I have a bad feeling about this," he stated before walking off. Frostsong rolled her eyes. "Toms..." She mumbled to herself.

Frostsong found herself in a field of mist. The paleish-purplish sky shone with stars above her, and the wind made it feel like she was walking on air. As she watched a thrush fly in the air and then suddenly disappear into mist, she realized that she was dreaming.

The mist from the thrush fell to the ground and swirled around in front of her, forming into a cat. It was Windstripe.

"Mom!" Frostsong exclaimed. She began to walk forward to her, but she stopped moving as Windstripe told her to through a flick of her tail.

"Frostsong," she started, "a great danger is coming. A threat and an outcome that will be unbearable. You need to wake up."

"What?"

"Wake up!"

Frostsong flung her eyes open, her breathing slowing from a rapid pace and accelerating back to normal. She looked around. It was around moonhigh, and the camp was calm. All the cats were asleep. There seemed to be no threat anywhere.

A cold breeze suddenly startled her. She looked down at her sleeping kits, love flaring in her heart. But she stopped as she realized something. She only counted three kits below her. She squeezed her eyes shut and opened them again, surely thinking she was just hallucinating.

She recounted the kits. *Mottledkit. Rosekit. Northkit. And...* She stopped as she realized that Shadowkit was missing.

She leapt to her paws and let out a yowl of alarm, waking up her kits in the nursery, along with Ravenfeather and Spiderpaw, her apprentice. They came rushing into the den, worry plastered on their faces.

"What is it? What's wrong?" Ravenfeather asked. "Shadowkit is missing!" Frostsong cried, horror in her tone. Ravenfeather looked down, and surely enough, Shadowkit was not present in her litter. "Spiderpaw, go get Brightstar! Wake up the clan!" Ravenfeather ordered.

Northkit yawned. "What's wrong, mom?" He asked. Frostsong tried to sound as unconcerned as possible, but failed. "Nothing, sweety. Now go back to sleep."

Northkit shook his head. "But I heard you guys sounding worried!" He protested. Frostsong sighed. "I'll tell you later. Right now, you need to go back to sleep," she said. Northkit nodded and layed his head down.

Brightstar and Orangefang came rushing into the nursery. "Shadowkit is missing?" He asked with a concerned tone. "What happened?"

"I woke up, and he was just... Gone!" Frostsong explained. Brightstar nodded. "We'll have the whole camp begin a search party for him. Orangefang, you round up the warriors and lead their group. I'll get the rest," he said.

Orangefang nodded and rushed off. Spiderpaw entered. "Spiderpaw, I need you to stay here and watch the kits. Can you do that for me?" Ravenfeather asked. Spiderpaw nodded and stood in front of the nursery.

"Pineclan!" Brightstar yelled when everyone was ready, "Move out!"

The forest was filled with the sounds of rushing cats. Frostsong ran frantically with Ravenfeather and Leapordfang. She stopped and sniffed the ground, avid to pick up Shadowkit's scent. "This way!" She yelled.

Ravenfeather and Leapordfang were close behind her. When they reached their destination, they found themselves at the Great Rocks. Frostsong started to get a bad feeling.

"Leapordfang, come with me to check over here!" Ravenfeather ordered. He nodded and followed her into some bushes. Frostsong watched them go, then frantically began to search the crevices of the rocks. She could smell Shadowkit as if he were right under her nose.

She looked at a big rock and recognized it as the rock she caught the vole behind the day Leapordfang asked her to be his mate. The memory made it seem as if she could still taste the vole in her mouth.

She jumped onto the rock. Without any hesitation, she looked behind it. The sight made her heart break, and her head began to spin.

Shadowkit's body lay on the ground with blood pooling around him. His fur was torn, and there were claw marks along his side.

Frostsong cried out in a pang of sadness. Her cries filled the forest as she hopped down the rock to sit with her dead kit.

Ravenfeather and Leapordfang came rushing into the area. They ran up to Frostsong, and their pupils shrank at the sight of Shadowkit's dead body.

"He was... Killed?!" Ravenfeather yelled. "Who would have done such a thing?!" Leapordfang cried out, tears swelling in his eyes.

Frostsong sniffed Shadowkit's body. An unbearable stench filled her nose, and she recoiled in anger as she made out the scent.

"Gorgeclan," she said.

Chapter 13

"Let all cats old enough to hunt their own prey gather under the lichenrock for a clan meeting."

Brightstar's words boomed across the clan. The cats exited their dens and gathered under the lichenrock, looking up at their brave leader.

"As you all know, last night, we found Frostsong's missing kit, Shadowkit, dead at the Great Rocks. I would like us to take a moment to mourn for his loss before I continue."

Shadowkit's body was layed in the center of the clan, and all the cats gathered around it to share tongues with him one last time before they buried him.

"Who would have done such a thing?" Jaysong, now an elder, called out. "I was getting to that," Brightstar said. "We have reason to believe that Gorgeclan has killed Shadowkit. We found many scents of Gorgeclan, along with some of their fur.

Yowls of rage and anger rang through the camp. Brightstar silenced them. "Don't worry. Orangefang and I have already plotted an attack. We will move out with a patrol group in three sunrises. Gorgeclan has made their first mark of war, and we gladly fight back."

The Pineclan cats nodded in agreement. "Our next order of business," Brightstar began, "is to apprentice three new kits. Mottledkit, Rosekit, and Northkit, please step up."

Frostsong's three kits stepped up proudly. "Mottledkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time you become an apprentice. From this day forward, you will be known as Mottledpaw. Your mentor will be Owlflight. May he pass down all the knowledge he knows to you to make you a great warrior."

Mottledpaw and Owlflight touched noses.

"Rosekit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time you become an apprentice. From this day forward, you will be known as Rosepaw. Your mentor will be Leapordfang. May he pass down all the knowledge he knows to you to make you a great warrior."

Rosepaw and Leapordfang touched noses.

"Northkit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time you become an apprentice. From this day forward, you will be known as Northpaw. Your mentor will be Greengaze. May she pass down all the knowledge she knows to you to make you a great warrior."

Northpaw and Greengaze touched noses, and Brightstar spoke up.

"This ends the clan meeting. Clan dismissed."

The clan seperated, and Frostsong watched as her three kits raced up to her. "Mom! Mom! We're finally warriors!" They exclaimed. Frostsong nodded. "That's great!" She felt a pang of sadness, knowing that Shadowkit should have been there with them.

As her three kits raced off, she was thinking about the battle in three sunrises. *I'm going to join that battle,* she thought to herself, *and I'll be the first to tear open Lichenstar's throat.*

Chapter 14

3 sunsets later

"Pineclan, it is time. We will avenge the death of Shadowkit by fighting back in this war!" Brightstar called out. The cats cheered.

"Here are the cats that will fight for Pineclan tonight: Orangfang, Leapordfang, Tawnynose, Ivystorm, Frostsong, Greengaze, Owlflight, Volepaw, Redpelt, and I. We will attack at sunset, for they would be expecting an attack most at night." He looked at the sun. "We need to leave soon. Eat some prey and get ready to leave."

The cats nodded and split up. Ravenfeather and Spiderpaw were hurrying around the medicine den to organize herbs. The warriors were settling in the apprentices and eating, preparing at the same time.

Sunset finally came. Frostsong looked around at the warriors who were making their way to the clan entrance to meet with Brightstar. She found Leapordfang and Tawnynose and joined them. "Are you ready?" Leapordfang asked her. She nodded. "I want to rip out Lichenstar's throat myself," she replied, anger burning in her eyes.

Brightstar spoke up, "Pineclan, are you ready?" The warriors nodded, leaving Brightstar to announce, "Move out!"

The Pineclan cats rushed through the trees. Frostsong jumped over fallen logs and bramble patches. They finally reached the Great Rocks, and Brightstar didn't hesitate to cross the border onto Gorgeclan territory.

The beginning of Gorgeclan territory was a regular forest, just like Pineclan. But Frostsong was stunned as they slipped out of the trees and onto hilly plains.

The group hid in tall patches of grass as they made their way to Gorgeclan camp, which was located near the Gorge. Talk about

being unlucky.

Frostsong slowed her pace with the group. Something wasn't right. She could smell another scent, but it smelled different than Gorgeclan, or any prey they usually caught.

They were hiding behind a patch of tall grass, peering into the camp, looking for quick openings and exits.

Brightstar looked around the group and met every cat's eyes. They nodded to tell him they were ready. Frostsong was looking into the camp. She noticed that the clan seemed bigger than she thought. But then she spotted Stonefang. Something was not right. Why was Leafclan here?

Before she could say anything, Brightstar yowled, "PINECLAN, ATTACK!"

The Pineclan cats burst into the clearing, startling the Gorgeclan cats. It was only then that Brightstar realized that Leafclan was there, too.

Frostsong headed straight for the leader's den. Before she could enter, a body tumbled into her. A pure white Leafclan warrior was pinning her down. He slashed at her shoulder, causing a deep wound.

Frostsong yowled in pain. She pulled her feet back and kicked off the warrior with all her might, sending him flying into a rock.

She got up and ran into the leader's den. To her surprise, it was empty. She quickly ran back out to keep herself from looking like a fool, and she spotted Lichenstar in the middle of the clearing, battling against Brightstar.

"You began this war, so we're making a move!" Brightstar yowled at him. "Oh, so you noticed the missing kit?" Lichenstar shot back eagerly.

Frostsong had had enough. She launched herself at Lichenstar, tumbling him over. He was shocked by the sudden attack, but he slashed at Frostsong's wound, opening it more. She yowled in pain,

and Lichenstar pinned her down.

"You should never mess with a leader," he said, baring his fangs as he prepared to lunge at her throat. Before he could make a move, though, he was knocked off by something.

Frostsong looked at the attacker. Her eyes widened as she saw Blackclaw on him, hissing and spitting him as he clawed him. Blackclaw had attacked his own leader!

Lichenstar pushed him off. "How dare you attack your own leader!" He scowled. Blackclaw said nothing, but instead, he ran off.

Lichenstar looked around and saw an opportunity. Frostsong prepared to lunge at him, but he dashed off in time and tackled down a warrior. Orangefang.

"Orangefang!" Frostsong yelled. She looked for Brightstar and saw him fighting with Tawnynose against three cats. She looked back as she heard a yowl and saw Lichenstar pinning Orangefang to the ground. Before she had time to react, he had already sank his fangs into him, pulling them out to rip open flesh and sprout blood.

A strange gurgling noise came from Orangefang, and Frostsong watched in horror as his body fell limp, the life drained from his eyes.

Orangefang was dead.

All the fighting cats stopped to look at the dead deputy, silence filling the air. "This is what happens when you don't abide by the rules of the strongest," Lichenstar stated in a menacing tone. "How many deaths will you take before you finally surrender?"

Frostsong looked back at Brightstar. His eyes were filled with tears for the loss of his deputy. "Pineclan... Retreat!" He yowled, sending the Pineclan cats rushing out of the clearing. As Frostsong left, she stopped for a brief moment to hear Lichenstar speak: "For attacking your own leader, Blackclaw, you are exiled from Groundclan!"

Groundclan? Frostsong thought to herself. She hurried back to the retreating group, listening to Blackclaw's footsteps, light behind

them.

"Pineclan," Brightstar started sorrowfully, "I have terrible news. We lost this battle, and we lost the life of our beloved deputy, Orangefang. Also, Gorgeclan and Leafclan seemed to have joined together into one clan."

Frostsong was sitting outside of the medicine den as Ravenfeather waa treating another warrior.

"Now, witthout further ado, I must appoint a new deputy. May Starclan approve of my choice as I speak these words. Frostsong, will you take up the position of the new deputy of Pineclan?"

Brightstar's words were still ringing in Frostsong's head when she noticed that the cats were staring at her. She sat up straight. "Yes, I do." She announced.

"Then by the powers given to me by Starclan, I hereby appoint you the new deputy of Pineclan!" Brightstar announced.

The cats began to cheer her name. "Frostsong! Frostsong! Frostsong!"

A rustling in the bushes silenced them all, and they were all shocked as Blackclaw stumbled into the clearing. "Frostsong..." He murmered.

"A Gorgeclan cat?"

"What's he doing here?"

"He followed us here! We should attack!"

Brightstar silenced the clan. "Frostsong, he said your name. Does he know you?" He asked.

Frostsong looked at her leader. "Yes. We met at the Gathering," she said. Blackclaw butted in: "Brightstar, I was exiled from my clan for attacking Lichenstar. I am weak and have nowhere to go. I beg that

you let me join your clan," he pleaded below the lichenrock.

Brightstar looked down at him thoughtfully. Then he met eyes with Frostsong. "Frostsong, you're the new deputy. What do you think?" He asked.

Frostsong's ears flicked with surprise. Brightstar was asking her to make a decision for the clan? "Well," she began, "he has already shown loyalty by attacking his own leader. I say we let him join."

"Then it is decided," Brightstar announced. "Blackclaw, you will now be welcomed as a full warrior of Pineclan. Pineclan, treat him like you would any other Pineclan cat. The meeting is dismissed."

The cats scattered, some occasionally shooting looks at Blackclaw. "Thank you so much! I promise I will repay you somehow!" Blackclaw exclaimed, weakly padding up to Frostsong. She nodded in welcome.

Ravenfeather stepped out of his den. "Frostsong, Blackclaw, you both look injured. My den, now," she demanded. The two cats shrugged weakly at eachother and walked in to get healed.

Chapter 15

Frostsong was laying in the medicine den with Blackclaw. Spiderpaw was treating her wounds, and Ravenfeather was treating Blackclaw's.

"Frostsong, I'm going to become a real medicine cat at my next journey to the Ninetree!" Spiderpaw told her as she placed chewed yarrow on her wounds. The Ninetree was the place where the medicine cats and leaders could interact with Starclan. It was a tree with nine thick branches, and usually as a leader gained their nine lives, Starclan would help them make their way up the tree. That's all Frostsong knew of the process, as told by the elders.

"That's great, Spiderpaw! It'll be nice for you to become a full medicine cat!" She exclaimed. "Now, I have to talk to Blackclaw for a minute. Are you almost done?"

Spiderpaw nodded. "Ravenfeather and I will stay out for a minute; but don't take too long. We still need to treat some scratches and bites."

The two medicine cats walked out of the medicine den, leaving Blackclaw and Frostsong alone.

"Blackclaw," Frostsong began, "what can you tell us about Gorgeclan and Leafclan?"

Blackclaw didn't hesitate; it seemed as if he wanted to share the information with her for a long time. "Gorgeclan and Leafclan have joined together to make Groundclan," he began. "It all started when Fallenstar decided to give Gorgeclan some of their territory. After that, Lichenstar had plotted an attack on their base. I was a warrior who went with them to the battle. We ended up winning, and Lichenstar persuaded Fallenstar to join clans. That's when Groundclan was born."

Frostsong looked at him with deep concern in her eyes. "Thank you

for the information," she said. "I need to go talk with Brightstar now."

She stood up and padded out of the den. "Where do you think you're going? You're not healed fully yet!" Ravenfeather croaked at her. Frostsong shot her a glance, and Ravenfeather shut up in respect.

Some warriors came up to her as she neared Brightstar's den. "Frostsong, the patrols?" Redpelt asked, being one of the warriors along with them. Frostsong blushed, realizing she forgot to schedule to sunset patrols.

"Oh, yes... Redpelt, you, Greengaze, Northpaw, Volepaw, and Ivystorm will go on the sunset hunting patrol. Owlflight, you, Tawnynose, Mottledpaw, and Leapordfang will go on the border patrol," she ordered. The cats nodded and headed off to gather everybody.

Frostsong finally padded in to the leader's den. "Brightstar, I need to talk to you. I have urgent news," she said. "Yes?" Brightstar asked.

"Blackclaw said that Gorgeclan and Leafclan have joined together to create Groundclan. They have shared their territory with eachother, and I believe that it's only a matter of time before they launch an attack to take our clan," Frostsong explained.

Brightstar was silent. His concentration seemed to have been focused on the ground. After a moment of silence, he asked, "Have I ever told you how Whitestar died?"

Frostsong shook her head. "I think Missingfang started to tell me when I was a kit... But she never finished."

"That battle I was in when I was a warrior... That battle was the roughest battle of my life. I had seen Whitestar's death before my very eyes, and the cat that killed him. It was Lichenstar. Not only did Lichenstar take away something precious from me, but he took away something precious from you, too. And now, I believe the prophecy is taking place," he explained.

Frostsong was confused. Surely he couldn't have known about the prophecy Windstripe gave to her... Right?

"Leaves will join the ground, and frost will cover the rest. Ravenfeather told me," Brightstar confessed.

Frostsong was stunned. He knew about it the whole time! Not only that, but as she looked back on it, she realized that half of the prophecy had already been fulfilled. Leaves with join the ground. Leafclan joined Gorgeclan and created Groundclan.

When Frostsong said nothing, Brightstar added, "I need to let you know that I am also on my last life."

Frostsong continued not to speak, the shock overwhelming her. "W-what? You can't be on your last life! What happens when you die?" She asked.

"When I die," Brightstar responded, "I will go to Starclan, and you will take my place."

"But I'm not ready to be leader! I was just given the position of the deputy!"

"I'm sure you'll be ready when the time comes," Brightstar ended the conversation. "Now go back to the medicine den and finish getting healed. I must prepare myself for the future and take some time to think."

Frostsong nodded and walked out of the den, her tail in between her legs, for she was scared of the future. She stepped into the medicine den, layed down, and fell asleep as Spiderpaw worked on her wounds.

Chapter 16

Frostsong awoke to hear the sound of yowling. She quickly jumped up and ran outside the medicine den. Her pupils were slit; she was fearful that Groundclan was launching an attack.

When she burst outside the entrance to the den, the fur on her back layed flat as she noticed no cats in the clearing except for the regular Pineclan cats. It was morning.

Frostsong looked around. Where could the screaming have come from? She was startled to hear it again, coming from the nursery. She smiled. She knew that Greengaze was expecting kits with Owlflight, but she didn't think they would come this soon.

She decided to go hunt. As she left the nursery, Leapordfang followed after her. "I don't want you to go alone," he said. "You never know when Groundclan could attack." Frostsong sighed and shrugged. "I guess it is better to have some company," she said.

She cracked open her mouth to drink in the fresh scent of mouse. Peering around, she saw a mouse laying in the center of a clearing on the Groundclan border. Except it was dead.

"Wait... Did someone forget to collect their kill?" Leapordfang asked. Frostsong shook her head. "I don't think so... Why else would it be not buried and laying in the center of a clearing, oblivious to anyone?" She stated. Leapordfang sighed. "I'll go hide in a bush... You can go get the mouse, and if anything happens, I'm here to help you out," he suggested, then ran off to hide in a nearby bush.

Frostsong gulped. This was a bad idea. She took in a deep breath, and before she went to collect the prey, she heard a voice.

"Frostpaw."

Frostsong looked ahead of her, stopping in her tracks. The bush behind the mouse rustled, and out came a very familiar cat.

Stonefang.

"It's Frostsong now," she grunted. He sighed, a look of sorrow in his eyes. "Alright... Frostsong... I wanted to tell you that I'm sorry. I was a terrible father to you before I left," he said. "Things have changed in this clan, and I can't take it anymore. Will you... Will you let me back in to Pineclan?"

Frostsong glared at him. "No. I don't have any proof that you've changed, and you've lost my trust the day you left," she stated. Stonefang sighed. "I thought that you'd say that..." He mumbled.

He went back into the bush and came out, holding what looked like a small fur bundle. It was black with white and dark grey stripes running through it, and it's eyes remained closed.

"This is your brother, Badgerkit," he said. Frostsong was shocked. "Who's the mother?" She asked. Stonefang answered with a look of sorrow in his eyes, "Fallenstar. If Lichenstar found out that she mated with me, he would surely kill her. So I, along with her, ask that you take in your brother and save him from the disaster we've gotten ourselves into."

Frostsong was stunned, tears swelling in her eyes. She had a brother. He seemed to resemble Shadowkit so much... And she knew she couldn't let Groundclan get a hold of a loved one again.

Reluctantly, she nodded and took the kit. At that moment, Leapordfang hopped out of the bushes. "Are you crazy? What will Brightstar say to this?!" He wondered aloud. Frostsong sighed. "He would have made the same decision," she replied. She nodded to Stonefang with one last look and walked off, Leapordfang at her heels.

When she arrived, she immediately rushed to Brightstar's den. When he let her in, he was surprised to see the kit dangling from her mouth. "Where did you get this kit?" He asked.

"I found him on our territory while I was hunting. He smells of

Groundclan, so I assumed that he must have just wandered through or was rejected," Frostsong quickly lied. Brightstar looked at it for a minute, then back at her. "Who will care for it? You're already the deputy," he said.

"I'll see if my sister can care for him," Frostsong relied. Brightstar nodded. "If she agrees, then he can stay. Otherwise, he will have to leave."

Frostsong found herself in the nursery in front of Greengaze, quickly and silently explaining the details of what happened with her and Stonefang, trying to be pursuasive as possible.

"Alright, I can care for him!" Greengaze interrupted. "I have plenty of milk to spare."

"Thank you so much!" Frostsong thanked. Greengaze nodded. "I'm sure Milkkit and Hawkkit will enjoy the company, too." Milkkit and Hawkkit were her two newborns.

Suddenly, a cry so loud came from the center of the camp, forcing Frostsong to her feet and bringing her out of the nursery.

"Groundclan, attack!"

Chapter 17

Frostsong watched as a Groundclan cat leapt from the bushes and pinned a cat down. More Groundclan cats flooded out of the bracken; it was an attack.

Frostsong stood defensively in front of the nursery. No Groundclan cat would be taking or killing any kits today. Not on her watch.

A brown tom leapt straight at her. As he collided, claws out, Frostsong held her ground. She unsheathed her claws and clawed at his shoulders, holding a firm grip, then launch him to his side and pinned him down, biting at his face. The tom yowled of pain and ran out of the camp.

Frostsong hissed. She saw Leapordfang fighting off a she-cat, Tawnypelt pinning down a tom, and Owlflight and Mottledpaw hissing and scratching at two other warriors. Northpaw and Rosepaw came running to the nursery, along with Ivystorm. "We'll help defend the nursery, mom! You go and attack!" Northkit stated. Frostsong smiled, nodded, and ran to the center of the clearing.

She spotted Lichenstar right away. He was in a heated fight with Brightstar, and she could see Blackclaw making his way to the leaders. Frostsong nodded at him, then ran with him to the fight.

Lichenstar had pinned Brightstar down. "This ends here!" Lichenstar yowled at him. Frostsong ran as fast as she could to them. She was about to lunge at Lichenstar, but it was too late. He already had bit down on Brightstar's neck, sending a pool of blood around him and his screech through the forest. All the cats stopped to look in horror.

Frostsong hissed and spat out of anger. She ran to Brightstar while Blackclaw lunged at Lichenstar and pinned him against the lichenrock, slashing at his throat.

"Brightstar!" Frostsong yowled. Brightstar still had a little bit of life

in his eyes. "It is coming," he mustered.

"What is?"

"The... The prophecy... Beware of the water..." He sighed, his last breath still ringing in Frostsong's ears. The life drained from his eyes and his once struggling body fell limp.

Brightstar was dead.

Frostsong turned around to hear a yowl and found that Blackclaw had cut open a part or Lichenstar's stomach, sending away a life. When Lichenstar opened his eyes, he screeched in terror and anger and ran out of camp, the Groundclan cats following close behind.

The clan was silent. The cats had gathered around Brightstar's limp body and began to share tongues one last time. Frostsong was the first, and she backed away. She felt hot tears running down her face at the sight of Brightstar's clan sharing tongues with him one last time.

A pelt brushed against Frostsong's side, and she turned to see nothing but the wind. Suddenly, it seemed as if it began to whisper in her ear.

"Your time had come. It is time for you to fulfill your destiny and lead Pineclan to victory."

"Brightstar?" Frostsong asked. There was no reply. The clan looked at her, wondering what to do. She breathed a nervous sigh and hopped onto the lichenrock.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather around the lichenrock for a clan meeting," she called aloud, never thinking those words would leave her mouth.

The cats sat around the base of the lichenrock, anxious to hear what Frostsong had to say. She spoke up.

"Pineclan, I am sad to say that Brightstar has lost his last life, and he is now hunting with Starclan. Being his deputy, it is time for me to take on the role as leader of Pineclan. Tonight, I will travel to the

Ninetree and gain my nine lives from Starclan. But first, I must appoint a new deputy."

The cats nodded in respect, waiting to hear who the new deputy would be. Frostsong cleared her throat.

"May Starclan approve of my decision. Tawnynose, will you take on the role of becoming the deputy of Pineclan?"

Tawnynose's eyes lit up with pride, and he nodded gleefully. Frostsong smiled. "Then it is decided. Tawnynose is the new deputy of Pineclan!" She yowled. The cats in the clearing were enthusiastic. "Tawnynose! Tawnynose! Tawnynose!" They chanted.

Frostsong walked alongside Ravenfeather as they made their way to the Ninetree. Frostsong was nervous; she didn't know what to do or what would happen.

"When we get into the clearing, we must be silent. But you will begin by jumping onto the lowest branch. Starclan will guide your body to jump onto all nine branches as you gain each life. When you wake up, you will be at the top. You must jump off. Then that will prove your bravery as a leader," Ravenfeather said.

Frostsong nodded, and they stepped into the clearing. The Ninetree was beautiful; it was illuminated by the flashing lights of fireflies.

Frostsong silently jumped onto the lowest branch and watched as Ravenfeather rested her head against it. So, she did the same, and instantly, she fell asleep.

Chapter 18

Frostsong opened her eyes. She looked around. She was in a field with tall grass and trees surrounding her; the sky was a pale purplish with stars glittering in it, and a purple aura seemed to fill the air.

"Welcome," a voice called out. Frostsong spun around to see a pure white cat with silver striped on his tail facing her. "I am Whitestar, one of the former leaders of Pineclan. It is time for you to become the new Pineclan leader; we will guide your body up the Ninetree, and with every leap, you will receive a life. Let us begin," he said.

He walked towards Frostsong and rested his head on her muzzle. "With this life I give you courage. Use it to guide youe clan in all the faces of danger you may meet."

A searing pain shot through Frostsong like thunder, but she contained her shouts in her head.

Whitestar backed up and let another she-cat step up. It was Windstripe. "With this life I give you love. Use it to get through the hardest times of life, and to love your clan like you do your mate." She rested her head against Frostsong's, and a pleasant but unexpected feeling shot to her heart.

Windstripe backed up and let a small, dark kit step up. It was Shadowkit. "Hi, mom!" He exclaimed. Frostsong wanted cry out of sorrow at the sight of her lost kit, but she maintained her sadness. "With this life I give you the strength of revenge. Use it only when times are needed, and only in the worst of them all," he squeaked. He rested his head against her shoulder, and a powerful strength shot through her muscles.

Shadowkit backed up, and Orangefang stepped up. "With this life I give you wisdom. Use it to guide your clan wisely," he stated. He placed his head against her muzzle, and a pain worst than the first shot through her. She couldn't help but let out a whimper.

Orangefang stepped back, and a dark brown tom stepped up. "I am Pinestar, the original leader of Pineclan. With this life I give you leadership. Use it wisely to guide your clan to victory." He placed his head to hers, and a surprisingly pleasant feeling ran through her body.

Pinestar stepped back, and a spotted cat stepped up. "I am Dappledpelt, one of the original deputies of Pineclan. With this life I give you hope for the future of your clan." A feeling like lightning ran up Frostsong as they connected their heads.

As Dappledpelt stepped back, Brightstar stepped forward. "Frostsong," he began, "I am so proud to see you become leader. With this life, I give you strength to fight your enemies. Use it for every use needed." He rested his head against hers, and the worst pain shot through her as if she were dying.

A final feeling of relief flooded through her as all the cats appeared again, and Brightstar spoke up. "You have received your nine lives, and you will now be known as Froststar. We will always guide you, and you will lead your clan well. Froststar!" He yowled.

"Froststar!" The other cats shouted in unison after him. Froststar stepped back and looked at them with pride.

Suddenly, the cats disappeared except for Brightstar. He remained and spoke up:

"The prophecy is almost complete," he said, a serious look in his eyes. "Leaves will join the ground, and frost will cover the rest."

"But what is going to happen?" Froststar asked aloud.

"That is for you to find out."

The purple area began to fade away, and Froststar backed up, not sure what would happen.

Froststar opened her eyes, sighing in relief that she had only woke up. The relief flooded away as she suddenly felt wind in her fur and looked down to see the forest. She was on top of the Ninetree.

She remembered Ravenfeather's words: "When you wake up, you will be at the top. You must jump off. Then that will prove your bravery as a leader."

She looked down. She recoiled back at the sight of the ground, eight branches under her. She sighed. *If Brightstar could do it, I can, too,* she thought to herself.

The top of the tree was a thick branch, the nineth one. She backed up on it, took a deep breath, and ran forward, leaping as her front paws felt no air at the end.

The wind howled in her ears. *Starclan, help me!* She thought as she was falling down. The ground grew closer, and she held out her front paws to land.

When they impacted with the ground, a shock was sent through her body. She collided her back feet, and helped herself with a little bounce before laying down in shock. Ravenfeather stood over her.

"Let me check your paws," she said. She looked at her front legs, and then her back, and nodded. "Your good. When Brightstar jumped down, he broke one of his paws," Ravenfeather announced. Froststar smiled. "Let's head back to camp," she said, triggering Ravenfeather to nod.

Chapter 19

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join under the lichenrock for a clan meeting," Froststar called out. The Pineclan cats gathered around.

"Pineclan, I have traveled to the Ninetree and received my nine lives from Starclan. I am no longer Frostsong; instead, I am Froststar," she said.

"Froststar! Froststar!" The cats cheered her name. She smiled. She was glad that the clan welcomed her as their leader.

"My first order of business," she started, "is to appoint some new warriors. Three apprentices have shown their worthiness of being warriors by fighting bravely in the recent battle with Groundclan. Northpaw, Mottledpaw, and Rosepaw, please step up."

Her three children stepped up, excitment practically radiating from their expressions.

"Northpaw," Froststar began, "you have shown your loyalness to the clan, and you have proved that you are ready to become a full warrior of Pineclan. From this day forward, you will be known as Northspring for your quick and agile abilities. We welcome you as a full warrior of Pineclan!"

"Northspring! Northspring!" The cats chanted. When they calmed down, Froststar spoke up again.

"Mottledpaw, you have shown your loyalness to the clan, and you have proved that you are ready to become a full warrior of Pineclan. From this day forward, you will be known as Mottledmist for your strength and quick thinking. We welcome you as a full warrior of Pineclan!"

"Mottledmist! Mottledmist!" The cats cheered.

"Finally, Rosepaw, you have shown your loyalness to the clan, and you have proved that you are ready to become a full warrior of Pineclan. From this day forward, you will be known as Rosebriar for your excellent skill of hiding and hunting. We welcome you as a full warrior of Pineclan!"

"Rosebriar! Mottledmist! Northspring!" The cats chanted and cheered in the crowd. Froststar smiled at her kits, who were now warriors. "This concludes our meeting. Clan dismissed," she called out, cueing the cats to leave and go back to their daily business.

Sup! It's Eily here! I just want to say thank you for reading this book! No, it's not over yet, I still have plans for the end. And I know this is a short chapter, but I got othee things to do, so... Uh, have a great day, I guess!

Chapter 20

Froststar stood at the base of the lichenrock, watching the clan's activity carefully. She smiled. Leapordfang was helping Tawnynose appoint some patrols. Badgerkit, Milkkit, and Hawkkit were playing with a ball of moss in the clearing. The sun was slowly beginning to set, and she knew that Pineclan must go to the Gathering tonight.

Froststar leaped up onto the lichenrock. "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey gather around the lichenrock for a clan meeting," she called out. The cats gathered and sat down, watching her.

"Tonight is the Gathering. We must go, and I must gather the cats that will go tonight," she said. Rosebriar spoke up from among the crowd. "Can we really trust Groundclan at the Gathering? What if they attack?"

Froststar shook her head and replied, "We can trust them tonight. The Gathering is a time of peace for the clans." The cats nodded, and a murmur of agreement broke out from the crowd.

"The cats that will be going are Northspring, Mottledmist, Rosebriar, Leapordfang, Tawnynose, Ivystorm, Blackclaw, and Jaysong. The others will stay back and guard the clan." The cats nodded, and the ones who were going to the Gathering gathered around the base of the lichenrock.

"Are you guys ready?" Froststar asked, jumping down into the group. They nodded. "Then let's head out."

By the time they made their way to the Meeting Pond, the moon was almost fully risen. The Pineclan cats broke out from the bracket patches and bushes and into the clearing.

"Ah. Pineclan," Lichenstar said, padding over to Froststar, "it's about time you showed up. Where is... Brightstar?" Froststar scowled. "You know what happened, Lichenstar. We will discuss this when it

is time."

The two leaders jumped up onto the meeting rock at the center of the pond, and Fallenstar soon followed after them. Lichenstar let out a yowl to silence the cats and bring their attention to them.

"Cats of all clans," he began, "welcome to the Gathering. Pineclan, would you like to begin?" Froststar nodded. She stepped forward and began to speak.

"Brightstar has died in a recent war," she said, glaring at Lichenstar. "Being his deputy, I have traveled to the Ninetree and recieved my nine lives from Starclan. I am now Froststar."

The cats gathered around nodded in appreciation. "Our new deputy is Tawnynose. That is all we will share tonight," she concluded. Lichenstar nodded and stepped forward.

"Congratulations on becoming leader, Froststar," Lichenstar began. "My news to share is that Leafclan and Gorgeclan have joined to create Groundclan, as many of you know. I am the main leader of it, and Fallenstar is our side leader."

The Pineclan cats in the clearing did not look happy. Lichenstar added, "And Froststar, we have a preposition. Groundclan would like to join clans with yours. If you agree, we would be the biggest clan of the forest! If you reject our offer, we won't hesitate to destroy you."

Froststar glared at Lichenstar as the Pineclan cats snarled and yowled in protest. She whipped her tail to silence her clan.

"Lichenstar," she began, "what would a forest be without more than one clan? Who would be there to maintain each territory individualy? How would we be able to do that together? Starclan needs more than one clan in this forest to maintain each territory. Would you really defy the name of Starclan, just for power?"

Lichenstar glared at her. "I'll ask again, Froststar. Do you accept our offer to join clans?" The cats were all silent as they waited for Froststar's response.

"No. Pineclan will remain an individual clan, alone," Froststar finally responded. Lichenstar grimaced. "Very well, then. We will make Groundclan the most powerful clan of the forest, one way or another. Groundclan cats, back to the clan!" He called out, sending the Groundclan cats on their way home.

Fallenstar hesitated and turned to Froststar. "Thank you for taking in my kit," she said before taking off with the rest of her clan. Froststar smiled after her.

"Pineclan, back to camp!" She called out. The Pineclan cats nodded and took off as she led them, racing back to camp to prepare for the upcoming disaster.

Chapter 21

"All cats old enough to catch their own prey, gather under the lichenrock for a clan meeting." Froststar's words boomed among the clan.

The cats sat down and looked up at Froststar, eager to hear what she had to say.

"Pineclan," she began, "at the Gathering last night, Groundclan threatened to attack after we rejected their offer of joining clans. So, I believe it is only fair if we attack first."

Gasps emerged from the group of cats, but some of them nodded their heads in approving thought. "Why would we attack first?" Redpelt called out. Froststar looked at him.

"I believe we should attack first because Lichenstar wouldn't expect it. Not only that, but we could save the anxiety and anticipation of an attack if we strike first. They might not be ready, giving us the upper hand."

"But do you remember what happened last time?" Northspring called out. Froststar shook her head. "I know what happened, but I believe this time, we must remain strong. Even if your dearest clan mate dies, you must continue to fight for the rightful freedom of our clan. We will not be controlled by Groundclan, and we will show our strength and resilience in this war!" She called out.

The cats cheered. Northspring nodded in approval, a bit ashamed of his curious protest. Froststar spoke up.

"I have been thinking, and I have decided that we will attack their clan in two sunrises. That should be plenty of time to train and get ready and fit. If in any case Groundclan attacks first, be ready to fight. To hopefully prevent that from happening, we will double our patrols and increase training. If you have any further concerns, please speak now."

The Pineclan cats were silent, looking around to see if anyone had thought of any precautions. Froststar smiled and nodded her head. "Very well then," she began, "Clan dismissed."

The cats parted, and Leapordfang and Tawnynose established patrols. Froststar jumped down from the lichenrock and looked around. The warriors were training and practicinf with eachother, and the mentors and their apprentices were training.

She sighed. Whatever would happen to the clan, she knew that the cats would look up to her for help and safety. She knew she had to be a rightful leader and bring justice back to the clans of the forest.

Is this what the prophecy means? She thought to herself. *Frost will cover the rest. Will I be the frost to cover the rest in justice and peace once again?*

Chapter 22

Two sunrises later

Froststar was gathered around the entrance to the Pineclan camp. All of the best warriors were going to the attack on Groundclan; Greengaze, Owlflight, and the medicine cat crew, knowing how to fight, stayed back to protect the clan and its kits.

"Pineclan, are you ready?" Froststar called out among her warriors. They nodded. Froststar smiled. "Pineclan, move out!" She ordered.

She raced in the front of the group of Pineclan warriors. They jumped over fallen logs and clumps of bracken, rejecting to stop no matter how hard their muscles ached.

They finally burst into the bracken on the very edge of the Groundclan border. They dropped into a crouch and sneaked through the tall grass to the edge of the Groundclan camp.

Froststar waited. She was well aware that her warriors were waiting for the signal to attack. She stayed in her crouched position as she watched the camp's activity.

It seemed as if the warriors were all calm. Some kits were playing in the middle of the camp, wrestling in a playful manner. Lichenstar was sitting under their meeting rock, watching the clan's activity viley. Fallenstar was sitting by him, staring at the ground as if she were thinking if something.

Suddenly, Fallenstar turned her gaze towards Froststar and locked eyes with her. Froststar went stiff, hoping Fallenstar would not alert the clan. But she saw a pleading and pleased look in her eyes.

Fallenstar got up and padded over to where the kits were playing. "Why don't you guys go in the nursery? I bet your mothers would like to play with you," Froststar heard Fallenstar say to the kits. They nodded, laughed, and tumbled into the nursery, crowding

their mothers.

Froststar sighed. The kits were safe now, and that was a relief. She didn't want to hurt any kits in this war, even though her own kit was hurt. She would never take vengeance for a kit. This was their chance.

"Pineclan, attack!" Froststar howled above the camp. The Pineclan cats burst into the clearing, Froststar at the lead.

She barreled straight into Lichenstar, and they became a writhing mass of fur, clawing and snarling at eachother, shedding blood recklessly. "Give it up! We're stronger than you!" Lichenstar screeched at her in a moment of no fighting. They lunged at eachother again, but Lichenstar was quicker and pinned Froststar down.

He delivered a blow at her head, but she dodged right in time. "Stop resisting! We've already won!" Lichenstar yelled at her.

Froststar was already badly damaged. Her left shoulder had a heavily bleading wound, and the back of her neck was scratched up and bleading.

Lichenstar was about to deliver another finishing blow, but something hurled into him that toppled him off of her. Froststar looked over to see who it was. She wasn't too surprised when she saw Fallenstar. It was only then that she realised that Fallenstar had been hinting some help every then and now.

Badgerkit. The thanks. Meeting eyes and putting the kits up to safety. Fallenstar had planned this all along!

"Fallenstar! What are you doing?!" Lichenstar screeched. Fallenstar had pinned him down. "You don't have the rights to rule my clan! Starclan gave me nine lives to rule my clan and become a leader, not some assistant of yours!" She bit at his neck, making it bleed heavily.

He yowled, shot up his legs, and kicked her off. He jumped at her and bit down on her throat, leaving a deep wound. The medicine

cat came and attempted to heal her as Lichenstar turned back to Froststar.

He jumped at her, but she dodged just in time. They lunged at eachother and became another heaving mass of fur and blood. They rolled to the edge of camp, veering uncomfortably close to the edge of the gorge.

"Your reign ends here!" Froststar screeched at Lichenstar. She had him pinned down. She was suddenly reluctant as she saw a glimmer of vile intelligence in his eyes. He grabbed her shoulders with his claws and barreled them both over the edge of the gorge.

Froststar was falling, Lichenstar in front of her. She saw cats gather above the edge of the gorge, watching as their leaders struggled to find hold and save their lives.

Beware the water. Froststar could almost hear Brightstar's words as it echoed in her mind again. It washed away as the freezing cold water met with her fur, and she was submerged in the depths of the gorge.

She stuggled to keep her head above, but she couldn't seem to against the rushing currents. Lichenstar was no where to be seen. Her lungs began to fill with water, anf she coughed for breaths.

Something tugged at her fur. She turned to expect Lichenstar trying to pull her under, but she was surprised at who it was. Stonefang had grasped the back of her neck in his jaws and was struggling to pull her to the banks of the gorge.

She was layed on the sand, sand sticking to her fur. She coughed up water, along with her father. Her gaze began to fade, but she heard him speak. "I've saved you like I did my son. Now I can rest in peace."

Those were the last words she heard before she blacked out.

"Froststar," Brightstar was standing in front of her. She was back in the place where she gained her nine lives. She was in Starclan. "You have

lost your first life, but for a great reason. Use your others even more wisely, and for the sake of the forest, like you did this one."

Light began to pour into her vision, and she opened her eyes.

Frostar opened her eyes. Tawnynose and Leapordfang were crouched in front of her, staring with eyes full of hope. "She's okay," Leapordfang sighed.

"Where's Stonefang? Lichenstar?" She croaked, coughing up more ice cold water. Leapordfang shook his head, and Tawnynose dipped his head in respect. "Stonefang passed. He took in too much water. I'm really sorry..." Leapordfang responded. Frostar was heartbroken. Her own father, who had betrayed her, gave his life to save her.

The padding of feet startled her. She turned her head to find Lichenstar limping to her weakly, coughing up water. Frostar unsheathed her claws, ready to fight. But Lichenstar didn't pose a threat. Instead, he began to speak, his eyes slowly glazing over as he spoke.

"A fourth is needed to fulfill the peace. When dangers pose threats, hawk and badger will rise to bring ease to all."

Lichenstar's eyes glazed over as he lost what was apparently his last life. Frostar stared at him in bewilderment. Lichenstar's reign was finally over. This war of the clans was finally over. She had no idea what would become of Groundclan, but she believed it would be good. She rose to her feet, and Leapordfang and Tawnynose helped her back up to where the cats were waiting.

Epilogue

"All cats old enough to catch their own prey, gather under the lichenrock for a clan meeting," Froststar called out among the clan. The cats gathered, eager to hear what she had to say.

"Pineclan," Froststar began, "we have recently been victorious in the battle between us and Groundclan. I have lost a life, but Lichenstar died, too. Fallenstar turned on him, which leads me to believe that Groundclan is no more, and Leafclan and Gorgeclan have returned." She said nothing about Stonefang.

"Luckily," she continued, "no warriors of ours were killed, and the ones who were injured have been healed. I have some other news. Ivystorm and Redpelt have decided to move on to the elders' den. Ivystorm, Redpelt, Pineclan thanks you for your hard work and service for our clan, and may the rest of your days be peaceful rest."

The clan dipped their heads in respect as Ivystorm and Redpelt padded over to the elders' den and sat down.

"This concludes our meeting. Clan dismissed," Froststar finished. She leaped off of the lichenrock and stared at the sky. She couldn't shake the prophecy Lichenstar gave before he died.

A fourth is needed to fulfill the peace. When dangers pose threats, hawk and badger will rise to bring ease to all.

Whatever it meant, whatever would happen, Froststar was ready.